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TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: The major Taipei dailies continued to focus on local politics, public hazards and a financial fraud scandal July 2-5. Some newspapers, however, discussed in their editorials Taiwan's legal status, U.S.-Taiwan relations, and President Chen Shui-bian's first ever "National Security Report" (to be released in late July). The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" editorial echoed a suggestion by former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, who said Taiwan should discuss Taiwan's legal status with the United States. A limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" editorial elaborated on AIT Director Douglas Paal's remarks at the July 4th celebration in Taipei last Friday, saying that while Taiwan is not a protectorate of the United States, Taiwan leaders take relations with Washington very seriously as the United States is Taiwan's best friend. A limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" editorial discussed the "rise of China," the United States' reaction to it and how Taiwan should deal with it in terms of U.S.-Taiwan relations. End summary.

A) "The [Taiwan] Government Should Discuss with the United States Taiwan's Legal Status; Clarifying Taiwan's Sovereignty [Issue] Is the Common Wish of All Taiwan People"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation 150,000] editorialized (7/5):

". In particular, following Taiwan's democratization, the Taiwan people have elected their president for the third time. [The Taiwan people] have their own government and congress; all these facts have made Taiwan a practically independent nation. It is thus a top priority for both the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan to work on such a new political fact and to thoroughly resolve the international political topic [concerning Taiwan's status], which was left unresolved since the [end of] the Second World War and to let Taiwan's sovereignty return to the hands of the Taiwan people and the government they elect.

"Former President Lee Teng-hui believes that Taiwan should discuss Taiwan's legal status with the U.S. government. Lee's proposal is of course the right remedial step to correct Taiwan's unresolved status. . We believe that the government should follow Lee's suggestion and discuss Taiwan's legal status with the U.S. government in an attempt to return Taiwan's sovereignty to the hands of the Taiwan people, as what the status quo is, and to get Taiwan out of the myth and illusion of 'one China,' to become a normal country and return to the international community. ."

B) "Friends Deserve Respect for Commitment to Shared Values"

The conservative, pro-status quo, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] noted in an editorial (7/4):

". At a recent event in Taipei held to mark the occasion, Douglas Paal, the de facto U.S. ambassador to our country, told his audience that Taiwan will always have a friend in the United States as long as we continue on the path of freedom and democracy.

"In his remarks, Paal noted that democratic values shared by both Taiwan and the United States from the basis of a lasting friendship that grows every day. .

"While Taiwan is not a protectorate of the United States and certainly does not take orders from Washington, leaders here take relations with the United States very seriously and work hard to coordinate efforts with friends in Washington, as the United States is truly Taiwan's best friend. .

"While we should never expect or rely upon the United States to dig us out of every mess we get into, we should treat the United States with the respect that a

good friend deserves at a time when we are truly in need of a good friend."

C) "Security Policy Needs Vision"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] commented in an editorial (7/4):

". Looking more broadly, the touted 'rise of China' encompasses a complicated and possibly explosive mixture of economic dynamism, an intensified military build-up, a rising potential for social instability, a possible loss of control by the political center and even a degree of opportunity for a political opening for democratization.

"Nevertheless, the mainstream thinking in the international community - led by the United States - remains preoccupied with a policy of 'con-gagement,' a combination of containment and engagement, to develop their relationships with the PRC.

"Taiwan must honestly recognize the existence of this international reality and prioritize its national security policies and work to achieve a balance of power that supports Taiwan's democracy and cross-strait peace. ."

KEEGAN